

REMARKS

Independent claims 1 and 11 are amended to include selected limitations from allowed claim 20. These limitations are thought to place these claims and the dependent claims in condition for allowance. Claims 4, 5, and 14 are cancelled. Dependent claims 6 and 15 are amended for consistency with the base claims. The amendments are made for the purpose of expediting prosecution and not for patentability, and the claim cancellations are made without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to pursue subject matter of the original claims (prior to amendment) and subject matter of the canceled claims in subsequent prosecution.

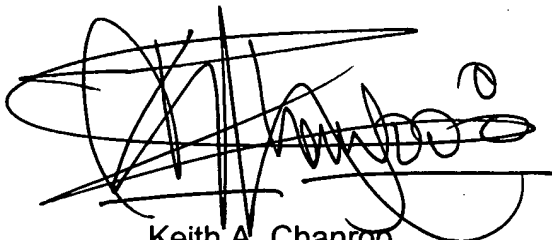
Claims 1-3, 6-7, 9-13, 15-16 and 18-22 remain for consideration and are thought to be allowable over the cited art. Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested. Applicants acknowledge the allowability of claims 20-22.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections under 35 USC §103(a) of claims 1, 9, 11, 12 and 18 over "Kean" (U.S. patent 5,701,091 to Kean) in view of "Masuda" (U.S. patent 4,366,478 to Masuda); claims 2-5, 13 and 14 over the Kean-Masuda combination in view of "Plants" (U.S. patent 6,237,124 to Plants); claims 6 and 15 over the Kean-Masuda-Plants combination, further in view of "Schneider" (U.S. patent 6,594,275 to Schneider); and claims 7, 10, 16, and 19 over the Kean-Masuda combination, further in view of "Hausman" (U.S. patent 5,872,920 to Hausman et al.). Kean, Plants, Schneider, and Hausman are not shown to suggest the various limitations as set forth in the previous responses to Office Actions. Furthermore, the alleged motivations for making the combinations are unsupported by evidence and improper. Thus, *prima facie* cases of obviousness have not been established for the claims. However, the rejections are now moot in view of the amendments to claims 1 and 11, and the rejections should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Reconsideration and a notice of allowance are respectfully requested in view of the Remarks presented above. If the Examiner has any questions or concerns, a telephone call to the undersigned is invited.

Respectfully submitted,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith A. Chanroo'.

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, on October 18, 2006.

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Pat Tompkins
Name

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Tompkins'.

Signature